

The Vengeance Scale: Development of a Measure of Attitudes Toward Revenge

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Although revenge has been implicated in a broad range of antisocial and criminal acts, there has been little psychological research on it. There is presently no scale measuring attitudes toward revenge in the psychological literature. This study, involving 600 undergraduates, was designed to develop and validate such a measure. Scale construction procedures were used that took into consideration the assessment of validity at all stages of scale development. The result was a 20 item Vengeance Scale with a Cronbach's alpha of .92. Correlations of the Vengeance Scale with the validating measure of Trait Anger and a measure of empathy were in the moderate range and in the predicted directions. In addition, there were high significant correlations between the Vengeance Scale and self-report measures of vengeful behaviors. The scale appears to be minimally contaminated with social desirability. The findings of face, concurrent, and construct validity attest to the validity of the measure. Test-retest reliability was .90. The Vengeance Scale can provide a useful instrument for the examination of individual differences in response to revenge-eliciting situations.

Revenge is the infliction of harm in return for perceived wrong. It is frequently cited as a motivating factor in human aggression. Vengeful aggression has been implicated in a wide variety of illegal and antisocial acts including arson (O'Sullivan & Kelleher, 1987), rape (Scully & Marolla, 1985), assault (Ney, 1987), vandalism (Wiesenthal, 1990), homicide (Porporino, Doherty & Sawatsky, 1987), shoplifting (Turner & Cashdon, 1988), and employee theft (Terris & Jones, 1982). Despite this, there is little psychological research on vengeance per se. Moreover, there presently is no scale in the literature to measure attitudes toward the

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